



IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims 1-3, 6-9 and 11-21 as shown below, in which changes are indicated by strikethrough and/or underscoring. Also, please add new claim 8 as shown below. Also, please cancel claims 10, 15 and 17 without prejudice and without dedication or abandonment of the subject matter thereof, and add new claim 22-24 as shown below.

1. (Currently amended) An elevated deck snowboard for sliding over snow, comprising:  
an elongated slide board having a slide surface on a lower surface thereof; and  
an elongated step board defining a deck on an upper surface thereof which freely accommodates both feet of a user, and attached to an upper surface of the slide board in spaced and substantially parallel relationship via a connecting assembly ~~made of substantially non-compressible and relatively rigid material~~ including a plurality of connecting members; and  
the connecting assembly being disposed inwardly of peripheral edges of the slide and step boards; and  
retaining the connecting assembly substantially preventing the slide board and step board ~~in a fixed, substantially parallel and spaced relationship in the immediate vicinity of the connecting assembly during use of the snowboard~~ from pivoting relative to each other in at least a lateral direction of the snowboard where connected by said connecting members during use of the snowboard, such that the deck board provides the user a significant leverage in controlling the peripheral edges of the slide board.
2. (Currently amended) A snowboard according to claim 1, wherein the connecting assembly is provided in a substantially longitudinally middle parts of the slide and step boards and includes at least two of said connecting members spaced from each other in a longitudinal direction of the snowboard.
3. (Currently amended) A snowboard according to claim 1, wherein the step board is appreciably greater in ~~both length and width~~ than the slide board.
4. (Original) A snowboard according to claim 1, wherein the step board is provided with an

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engagement portion for allowing engagement of a toe of a snowboarder in a nose part thereof

5. (Original) A snowboard according to claim 1, wherein the step board is provided with at least one boot binding.

6. (Currently Amended) A snowboard according to claim 1, wherein the connecting member assembly retains substantially completely prevents the slide board and step board in fixed parallel relationship from moving relative to each other where connected by said connecting members during use of the snowboard.

7. (Currently amended) A snowboard according to claim 1, wherein said connecting assembly ~~comprises a plurality of connecting members are~~ are formed of a substantially rigid material and substantially immovably fixed between the slide board and the step board.

8. (Currently amended) A snowboard according to claim 7, wherein the connecting members are substantially tubular in shape.

9. (Currently amended) An elevated deck snowboard for sliding over snow, comprising:  
an elongated slide board having a slide surface on a lower surface thereof; and  
an elongated step board defining a deck on an upper surface thereof which freely accommodates both feet of a user, and attached to an upper surface of the slide board in spaced and substantially parallel relationship via a connecting assembly comprising a plurality of connecting members disposed inwardly of peripheral edges of the slide and step boards and made of substantially non-compressible and relatively rigid material such that portions of the slide and step boards remain in a fixed, substantially parallel and spaced relationship in the immediate vicinity of where connected by the connecting assembly members during use of the snowboard.

10. Cancelled

11. (Currently amended) A snowboard according to claim 10, wherein the connecting ~~member~~ is members are formed of at least one of hard plastic material and metallic material.

12. (Currently amended) A snowboard according to claim 10, wherein the connecting ~~member~~ is members are substantially tubular in shape.

13. (Currently amended) A snowboard according to claim 9, wherein the connecting assembly is provided in a ~~substantially~~ longitudinally middle parts of the slide board and step board.

14. (Currently amended) A snowboard according to claim 9, wherein the step board is appreciably greater in ~~both length and width~~ than the slide board.

15. Cancelled

16. (Currently amended) A snowboard according to claim 1, wherein the connecting assembly includes at least two of said connecting members spaced ~~laterally apart~~ from each other in a longitudinal direction of the snowboard.

17. Cancelled

18. (Currently amended) An elevated deck snowboard for sliding over snow, comprising:  
an elongated slide board having a slide surface on a lower surface thereof and snow engaging peripheral edges;

an elongated step board defining a deck on an upper surface thereof which freely accommodates both feet of a user; and

a connecting assembly made of substantially non-compressible material connecting the step board to an upper surface of the slide board in spaced and substantially parallel relationship such that the user's feet may be shifted on the step board during use for imparting leverage through the step board to control orientation of the slide board on the snow;

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the connecting assembly being disposed at intermediate portions of the slide and step boards inwardly of the peripheral edges of the slide and step boards, and so as to substantially prohibit relative prohibiting at least lateral pivoting movement between portions of the boards in the immediate vicinity of the connecting assembly where connected by the connecting assembly during use of the snowboard.

19. (Currently amended) An elevated deck snowboard for sliding over snow, comprising:

an elongated slide board having a slide surface on a lower surface thereof;

an elongated step board defining a deck on an upper surface thereof which freely accommodates both feet of a user, the step board being appreciably greater in ~~both length and~~ width than the slide board; and

a connecting assembly made of substantially non-compressible material connecting the step board to an upper surface of the slide board in spaced and substantially parallel relationship, and to allow a substantially increased leverage for the user in controlling the slide board by prohibiting at least lateral pivoting movement between portions of the slide and step boards where connected by the connecting assembly during use of the snowboard, the connecting assembly being disposed at intermediate portions of the slide and step boards inwardly of peripheral edges of the slide and step boards.

20. (Currently amended) A snowboard according to claim 19, wherein the connecting assembly substantially prohibits all relative movement between portions of the slide and step boards where connected by the connecting assembly ~~retains the slide board and step board in a fixed, substantially parallel and spaced relationship~~ during use of the snowboard.

21. (Currently amended) A snowboard according to claim 18, wherein the connecting assembly is made of substantially non-compressible and relatively rigid material and is substantially immovably fixed between the slide board and the step board.

22. (New) A snowboard according to claim 1, wherein said connecting assembly is disposed

*E1 Cancelled.*

closer to lateral peripheral edges of the slide and step boards than to longitudinal peripheral edges of the slide and step boards.

23. (New) A snowboard according to claim 9, wherein said connecting assembly is disposed closer to lateral peripheral edges of the slide and step boards than to longitudinal peripheral edges of the slide and step boards.

24. (New) A snowboard according to claim 19, wherein said connecting assembly is disposed closer to lateral peripheral edges of the slide and step boards than to longitudinal peripheral edges of the slide and step boards.

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